

The Branch Resources Review Executive Summary

As part of the Branch Resources Review, authorized in 2018 by motion 126 at National Delegate Conference, Workstream A of the Review issued a survey to all UNISON Branches in February 2020, to be conducted online by Branch Secretaries. The questions asked reflected both the existing UNISON Code of Good Branch Practice and were the result of a discussion on how to structure the questions at the meeting of the Branch Resources Review held in early February.

Most of the questions included in the survey ask respondents to use a scale from 1 to 5, to indicate how well they feel supported to conduct various aspects of their work on behalf of the union, with those aspects all reflecting the Code of Good Branch Practice.

The survey was sent out with a deadline, which as chance would have it was also the final week before the UK went into full lockdown to deal with COVID-19.

A total of 357 branches responded including a handful which responded sometime after the formal deadline.

With a total of 843 branches at the time of the survey, responses from 357 branches represented a response rate of over 42%. Perhaps unsurprisingly, response rate varied between regions and between service groups.

The response rate was highest in Northern Ireland closely followed by the Northern Region; local Government and Health service groups provided the highest response.

Despite a decade of austerity, the branches who did respond still felt that they had received the support that they required to fulfil the main elements of the Code of Good Branch Practice but this was now under threat.

The survey demonstrated that branch activists do want to recruit and retain members, develop the skills of activists and support members with representation. However, it was clear that there were three distinct areas where branches felt that they needed improved support. These were:

- More time including facility time
- More support from the regions
- More financial support.

Other common themes included access to legal advice, accessible, tailored information for branches on the UNISON website and a feeling that Motion 126 was an opportunity to not only make branches fit for purpose but fit for the future